

TURKISH OFFENSE WITH ACCUSATIONS AGAINST ARMENIANS AND GREEKS

An American Observer Describes For The New York Herald the Result of a Tour of the Interior Made Under the Direction of the Turkish Military Governor.

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SMYRNA, Anatolia, Oct. 8. UNDOUBTEDLY the Turk had his day when Smyrna was taken over, but the Turk is not the only one at fault. We have always been taught to believe that the Turk was a bloodthirsty sort of fellow who carried a huge scimitar and chased poor Armenians all over the landscape. That is the picture that I had expected to see when first we came to their shores. The topography of the country is ideal for such a scene. The rolling hills against the cloudless sky would make an ideal setting for such a chase. But I have seen no such sight. Maybe the Turks had already caught them all.

After having visited the interior of the country and looked upon the work of the Greeks and the Armenians I am not so ready to criticize the Turks for the things that they have done. When you have looked at scores of ruined and destroyed mosques it is rather difficult to work up much of a rage at the destruction of a few churches. Where thousands have been made homeless by the one there are thousands who are homeless as the result of the actions of the other. It is difficult to distinguish between two shades of black.

In our eagerness to help the evacuated Greeks and Armenians we must not be too eager to put all of the blame on the Turk. There are two sides to this question as well as to all others and the American public must not be carried away by the force of their sympathy until they have heard the whole story. Undoubtedly there will be many bloodcurdling tales told by those who witnessed but one side of the tragedy, by those whose sympathies are entirely one sided, and by those who have their own ends to meet, but remember, there are two sides.

The Turks have been, and continue to be, very friendly to all Americans. The French are in the good graces of the Turks. It is to be expected that the British and the Turks would be none too cordial, due to the political situation, but I have heard of no massacre of Britishers.

Many Individual Outrages

By Turkish Soldiers.

During the evacuation of the refugees there were many cases where individual Turkish soldiers robbed and beat men, women and children. There were some cases where their officers saw and countenanced this sort of thing, but in the majority of cases the soldiers were very decent toward the refugees. I saw many soldiers severely beaten by their officers for stealing from refugees as they were on their way to the ships. There will soon be movies depicting the embarkation of the refugees, and even in the pictures will be seen evidence of the Turks robbing the refugees.

In thinking of these robberies one must adopt the Turkish attitude for a moment. His viewpoint is this: All that belonged to the Greek and the Armenian is now mine! According to his own lights he was playing the game pretty fairly. This is not an excuse for the Turk; it is an effort to present his side in a fair sort of way.

Today I visited Bournabat, a suburb of Smyrna. It was one of the residential districts and evidently occupied by the well to do class of Greeks and Armenians. There are many wonderful large estates surrounded by magnificent gardens with fountains, tennis courts and fine shrubbery. All of these houses are now occupied by the Turkish army and the village is a model of peace and contentment. I doubt if one

could start a cat fight there. Without any doubt, all of the houses have been well looted and little of any value left. There is a little cemetery just outside the town, a European cemetery, and as I had heard tales of desecration I went in. All of the stones, crosses, monuments and markers had been knocked down and destroyed. Many of them were broken into little bits. Evidently some one had vented his spite on this little cemetery, and I do not believe that it was either Greek or Armenian who had done it. I had heard that the graves were opened up, but that was not true. No graves had been opened in that cemetery. I have heard from reliable sources, however, that the graves of Christians have been opened and the bodies disturbed.

I also made a trip through the Jewish section of the city this afternoon. Everything seemed to be normal, except a little overpopulation perhaps. While returning we met four Turkish soldiers carrying a stretcher on which was a body covered with bloody rags. From all that we were able to learn it was the body of a Greek or Armenian who had been convicted of crime and publicly beheaded.

There are rumors of murder and torture of the refugees by the Turks along the coastal cities, and it is quite likely that many of these tales are true. Such things are very hard to prove, and one may not make a statement without proof.

Through the Interior

Along Turks' Line of March

Last week I was one of a party of American and European newspaper correspondents taken into the interior along the line of the Turkish march on Smyrna. The trip was arranged and conducted by the Turkish military authorities under the direction of Nureddin Pasha, Military Governor of the Smyrna area.

Before we had left we were interviewed by various officials and representatives of local Turkish papers. We were informed that we were going to see terrible sights—that we would need perfume because of the smell; that it was like going through hell. Also we were told that we were very unfortunate indeed, for there was no one to cook for us, but that they would do the best they could. That had us worried.

Our first stop was Menemen. As the train pulled into the station we found that we were expected. All of the village was there to greet us. As we descended from our train we were met by the Colonel commanding the troops with his staff, the Mayor, the town President and the village teachers in their white encircled fezzes. The President, through an interpreter, called upon one of the leading citizens to tell the story of the Greek atrocities.

He started off well, beginning with September 8, and telling in detail all that happened or was said during all of the day. He made an especial point of the fact that the Greek priest announced that the Menemen would be burned the day the Greek troops arrived. He went on at great length to tell of the measures the Turkish population took to guard against the burning of the city and worked himself into a terrible state of mind. When it was all finished we learned that nothing had happened to Menemen. They said that the retreating Greek army did not have time to destroy the village.

But they had an ace up their sleeves. They wished us to go for a little trip into the country where there were the bodies of some Turks who had been murdered by the Armenians and we must see them. Well and good; we all got into carriages and drove out into the country for about two miles and then into a farmyard. There the party all gathered around an old well which appeared to have been filled with weeds.

A soldier in the party, evidently brought for the purpose, took a long pole and began pushing and scraping



at the refuse in the bottom of the well. All of the Turks began holding their noses and rushing away from the well. "Do you not smell them?" they asked. "There are eighteen of them." We not of the Turkish race all admitted that we did not; thereupon the soldier went to work again trying to uncover the bodies. After about fifteen minutes of pushing and scraping he appeared very excited and they said he had uncovered a head. Again we looked and again saw nothing. I did smell something, however, but whether it was Turk, Armenian, Greek or swine I could not say. The Turks had evidently convinced themselves, so away we went back to the train.

I had started from Smyrna anti-Turk, and now my sentiments were being confirmed. The whole thing was evidently a propaganda trip, well laid out and all of the actors coached in their various parts. We were to see nothing except what they wished to show us, and were to hear lots of wild tales without any material evidence. Believing that to be the case, we just settled back and decided to let them go to it and then we would write as we felt.

Burning of Magnesia Blamed

On Retreating Greek Army

Our second stop was at Magnesia, about sixty-six kilometers inland from Smyrna, where we were met by the reception committee, consisting of all the town and district notables, led by Lieut.-Col. Cassim Pasha, a tall, slender, forceful appearing soldier.

He was very well prepared with statistical data, the substance of which was as follows: The population was 50,000, of whom there were 42,000 Turks, 8,000 Greeks. Some 10,700 houses, 13 mosques, 2 baths, 2,728 shops or stores, 19 hotels, 28 residences, 3 flour mills, 5 farms and 1,740 houses in suburbs had been destroyed, while 3,500 of the Moslem population had lost their lives in the flames and 167 had been wounded while trying to escape from the burning area.

Then we sat down to tea and this story of the disaster was related to us: The retreating Greeks had an organized band of incendiaries equipped with machines for spraying oil, and as they retreated through the city they went through the various streets spraying the houses and setting them afire. When the inhabitants came out of their houses and attempted to put out the fires they were shot at, many of the fires being killed in this manner. Greek patrols covered the city to assure themselves that all of the city was fired before they left.

As the Greeks retreated they took with them 228 young girls, none of whom has ever come back. After some of them had been assaulted, it is said, they were compelled to drink petroleum and were set on fire.

Having heard the story of the destruction of the city, we started on a personally-conducted tour of the city—



personally conducted by all of the remaining inhabitants of the city. It was a sad sight to see the ruins of the city, and it was very little left. It is hard to conceive of such complete destruction as we saw. Acres and acres were completely wiped out, with nothing left on which to make a start.

Our next stop was Cassaba, famous for its melons. We were met by the usual reception committee and guard, this time the principal speaker being a young Turkish lady. She spoke in perfect French, telling us of their great misfortune and of their present needs, saying that they had neither food nor shelter and were in need of flour and tools and materials to build houses of some sort before the approaching rainy season.

We were told that Cassaba had been a city of 40,000 inhabitants—37,000 Turks and 3,000 non-Moslems. Of that number there are now 6,000 remaining in the city, 1,000 killed and burned, the 2,000 non-Moslem residents gone with the Greek army and the remainder unaccounted for. There were 6,000 buildings in the city and all were destroyed except 2,000.

The story of Cassaba was similar to that of Magnesia. The Greeks are said to have used petroleum to make certain that the city should burn, and several witnesses testified as to seeing the incendiaries, assisted by the Greek and Armenian inhabitants, setting fire to the city. We heard the same story of outrage and loot, murder and wanton destruction, but still we were skeptical. We could see the results of the fire—the complete destruction—but we could not see the stories of outrage and looting. We were still looking for concrete evidence and were not finding it.

We traveled on to Alashehr, dining on the way. Traveling on the Smyrna, Cassaba and Prolongment railway is not a pleasure. We had started from Smyrna fairly clean and respectable in appearance, but now we were completely dirty. The dust was so thick that breathing became difficult. We gave up any idea of trying to keep even reasonably clean and gave ourselves over to the dust of Anatolia.

Alashehr was our destination and the furthest point of travel inland. We spent the evening visiting with the Major, Emir Fuad, who is the non-



Military Governor of the city. He is a splendid sort of fellow, very pleasant and likable, and he exerted himself to make us feel that we were very welcome.

First we learned that Alashehr means "The White City." It was the ancient city of Philadelphia, or the "City of Brotherly Love." Alashehr certainly lived up to its name.

The evening was spent in discussing the burning of the city. We were told the fires were started near the market districts and almost immediately fires broke out from every quarter. The Greek civilian population helped the soldiers in firing the city and also worked as much of the water supply as they were able. The soldiers robbed and killed the Turks and many were burned to death in their houses as they dared not venture out for fear of being shot.

Fires Started in Smyrna

When Patrols Withdraw

While they were discussing the burning of Alashehr the subject of the burning of Smyrna was brought up. We asked them to explain how it happened that Smyrna did not burn until the fourth day after the Turkish occupation and what precautions had been taken to save the city from destruction by fire. The Turkish intelligence officer said they did expect that an attempt would be made to burn Smyrna and they believed that it would start in the Armenian quarter; that for the first three days they had kept a heavy patrol in that section, but that the Greeks had passed and all seemed peaceful and secure; they had reduced the patrol and then the fires were set.

Asked why they had expected the fire to start in the Armenian quarter, he said that the Armenians had more courage than the Greeks and were consequently used by the Greeks for most of the dirty and dangerous work.

Alashehr had a population of 35,000—12,000 in the city proper and 23,000 in the suburbs. Now there are 5,000 left; there were 4,000 houses and now there are 100 standing; there were 3,000 shops or stores, of which but three remain; there were twelve mosques and twenty smaller places of worship, of which none remain. The



twenty-two small villages which went to make the suburbs are all wiped out. Approximately 600 known dead were found, while there are thousands missing, and it is not known what became of them. Searching parties are still on the mountain side trying to find trace of them.

Eyoub Helmi, a civilian, testified that several Greek officers were living with him and they had told him that the city would be burned as soon as the Greeks commenced their retreat through that area.

The story continued that the Greek army fired the town, using oil to insure themselves of a good job, looted and murdered ruthlessly and then went on their way, taking at least 150 of the young girls with them.

Atrocities in Alashehr

Seemed Devoid of Proof

There were several cases of atrocities which were to prove the tales. First we heard of a young girl whose breasts had been cut off. When we asked to see her it was declared impossible. Next a lady was brought in who was said to have gone mad due to what she had seen. To us she appeared rational.

Then a Turkish lady was introduced who stated that she was the directress of a young girl's school, and said that the Greeks had broken down the school house door, entered and robbed all of the young ladies of everything they had and then some of the Greek irregulars started the girls toward the station. They were able to get away from the irregulars, but were then fired upon with machine guns and cut down in the streets.

Many escaped into a garden, when about twenty soldiers came along and commenced to beat them. An officer named that way and the soldiers ran away, but the officer entered the garden and forced them to march down toward the station to a factory owned by a Mr. Forbes, an American. That is the last she saw of the other young ladies, as she was able to escape by hiding in the garden.

Then we were shown a certified and sealed list of the 600 known dead. That looked pretty substantial and was considered presentable evidence. It will be noted that up to this time, except for the burned cities, we had not seen nor heard any evidence that would bear much investigation. We were becoming more and more skeptical, wondering if the Turks thought we were children and would believe anything they told us. We had not seen a dead body nor had we met any wounded person nor had we first hand story to tell. We were getting fed up with what seemed like the rankest sort of propaganda, but now things were about to happen.

Then one of the inhabitants said that he could show us graves to prove their statements of the numbers of the dead. Remember, they said there were 600 dead and we wanted to check

He Finds that Churches and Mosques Were Destroyed, Christians and Moslems Murdered With Equal Ardor; Many of the Stories Told by Both Sides Not Supported by Proof.

up to some extent. They led us into a vineyard and there we found a man busily engaged in digging bodies so that we should see some real evidence. The graves were shallow, with not more than twelve or fourteen inches of earth over the bodies, so it was not long before one body was uncovered. Unfortunately the spade was thrust into one of the bodies during the operation and we had to beat a hasty retreat. I am willing to swear that there were bodies buried there, however.

In our wanderings about the town we visited many mosques and at one saw the tomb of the builders of the mosque. The bodies were encased and laid on slabs in a reclining position, with a fez at the head of the slab. We were informed that the bodies had been there for five centuries and that no possible claim could be laid against the Greeks for their death.

Seventy-six Bodies Found

In Ruins at Alashehr

We now started retracing our steps, bound for Smyrna again. As we left Alashehr we learned that we were due to meet Mustafa Kemal's train at Salikli and we became very much excited over the prospect. We met the train at Salikli, but as we pulled in his train pulled out and we just had a glimpse of him as he waved to the cheering village folk.

Salikli must have been a real pretty town. The main street was quite wide, perfectly straight, and well shaded. The fact is this street was the salvation of what remains of the town. The city did boast of 3,000 houses, of which 2,000 were burned. There were 400 shops, 24 hotels, 16 bakeries, 21 coffee houses, five flower mills, one moving picture house, two mosques, one synagogue and one Government building, the telegraph office, burned. The population had been approximately 10,000, of whom 1,000 were non-Moslem. The non-Moslem population left two or three days before the firing of the town. The city was burned on September 5 and to date seventy-six bodies have been found and buried. About 8,000 people are now in the town, many of them homeless.

The story of the fire followed the same lines as in the previous case. The Greeks came, started burning the city, looted the houses and shot all who crossed their paths. Many pitiful stories were told of the abuse of the people by the Greek army, some of which will bear repetition.

First we heard a wounded man who said that he was in his house when some Greek soldiers entered, robbed him of 600 lire and then started away, taking his son with them. He tried to reach his boy and was shot in the side. Next a little boy limped in. He told his own story, sobbing the while, of how he had run out of his burning home and had been shot down by a Greek soldier. Asked if the soldier had aimed at him and fired, he replied that he was near a tree at the time and the soldier had fired right at him.

Says Greek Sergeant

Proved an Archrobber

Then a man told of how his home had been broken open, one man shot through the throat, another wounded and he himself shot through the arm. A Greek sergeant had come along and drove the soldiers away and then turned and robbed them himself, without any competition.

Two women came in an related their stories. One told of how her son-in-law was shot and the other how her home had been broken open, robbed and her husband killed. Then a little girl told of how her father had been beheaded after he was robbed of five lire and how she had been beaten by the Greek soldiers.

Most pitiful of all was the story of the next witness, a little boy about 8 years old, who told how he had seen his thirty-year-old brother caught in the street and beheaded. His story caused one of the Turkish reporters who got it first hand, to break down

entirely, which is not usual with a Turk.

We had heard tales of assault, so the lady, the only party investigated that, interviewed one of the girls and confirmed the story.

Now we had indeed seen evidence of atrocities and could not help but believe. Little children could not even imagine such tales unless they had seen them. We saw the wounds themselves and heard the stories from the people who had received them and we were convinced that there had been terrible doings in the Greek retreat.

On the way back to the station we saw a large body of men marching along on the next street, so went down to see what was going on. It was a body of recruits from the country marching to a concentration camp to be armed and equipped. They were a hardy looking lot of fellows, of all ages from 20 to 50, and sang as they marched. Evidently Turkey is still mobilizing.

We were informed that they would be equipped with rifles and army gear captured from the Greeks. I suppose that they will be clothed in United States army uniforms, for all of the Turkish troops that we have seen are wearing the United States army uniform complete even to the buttons. It would be interesting to know where these uniforms came from. The Greeks would have come from the United States, it would seem a wise precaution to remove army buttons from all uniform clothing sent to relieve the poor Russian Bolsheviks before it left the United States.

Turk Not Black as Painted,

Is Observer's Conclusion

I started into the interior anti-Turk, skeptical of all that was told me or shown to me. My first experience did not tend to lessen my doubts or suspicions. I had indeed begun to congratulate myself as to my keenness in reading the Turk character. Gradually, however, I came to realize that the Turkish people and their ways of doing things, entirely different from our ways, I found that my preconceived ideas and prejudices were being overturned; that the Turk was not as black as some would like to paint him, and that he could be and was quite a decent sort of person. I saw that I was used to running the wrong way of doing things, entirely different from our ways, I found that my preconceived ideas and prejudices were being overturned; that the Turk was not as black as some would like to paint him, and that he could be and was quite a decent sort of person. 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